

of London in much the same way that a proud red splashed over a quarter of the land masses shown on maps of the world. In *Pax Britannica* another British journalist, James Morris, has fittingly chosen Jubilee Day as backdrop for an exuberantly sentimental but by no means credulous journey through the Empire at its zenith.

Pax Britannica takes you first class all the way (P. & O. wherever possible, of course). You gape at the chandeliered ostentation of the Viceroy's palace in Calcutta and groan at the iron grotesquery of the Mall in Simla. In the depths of central Africa you gallop after foxes (correction: jackals) with the Salisbury Hunt Club. You rub shoulders with Australian sheep barons and win a packet at the Melbourne Cup races. You continually meet gorgeously cockaded and bemedalled fellows holding the Queen's commission (including the Royal Navy admiral who removed his jacket before saying his prayers, horrified at the idea of a British officer kneeling in uniform). In Hong Kong you attend Sunday services at St. John's Church, cheek-by-jowl with Government House and the inevitable public gardens, barracks, and cricket pitch. In a hundred officers' messes and wardrooms you drink the Queen's health. In southern India's Ootacamund Club you join in a game of snooker—appropriately, too, snooker having been invented at "Snooty Ooty." And naturally you have your sundowner at Shephard's.

Mingling in this orgy of swank are

the Empire's titans in all their magnificent effrontery: Salisbury, Chamberlain, Rosebery, Curzon, Kitchener, Lugard, Cromer—to name only a few—and a host of lesser deities. At the drop of a silk hat they will hasten to make it clear that they aren't really imperialists but New Imperialists; this is an important distinction which divorces their robust rule from the tyrannies of past history. "The British would not for long support an institution that was patently unfair, or betrayed the muffled decency of their national code." They don't try to deny that the overseas possessions have brought in enormous profits ("the deepest impulse of the Empire was the impulse to be rich"), but "there was nothing rude then to the epithet of capitalist. It was thought very proper for the British moneyed classes to plow their cash into Indian railways, African mines and Polynesian copra." Nor can you sensibly dispute their benevolent but firm authority over a third of a billion "natives"; after all, the imperial mission has been divinely ordained. "In that last heyday of Christian power the British had no doubts about the superiority of their civilization and its faith. They believed it to be their duty, however arduous or expensive, to distribute it among the heathen and the ignorant . . . they had been chosen for this task." There are the nay-sayers, to be sure, but in the heady climate of self-adulation they receive short shrift. Gladstone, once the thundering Jehovah of anti-imperialism, "watched sadly from his last retirement

. . . as member after member of his shattered party fell into the moral error he himself had dubbed jingoism." Economist J. A. Hobson, "the most forceful of them all . . . preached to an unresponsive audience. In Russia the young Lenin heard him, and believed. In England few listened."

THE thing is far too big, far too arrogant. Its stupendous cheek alone is enough to make you want to reach for the nearest blunt object. Why, then, do you find yourself liking the swaggerers? Perhaps even respecting them? Of course, you may not like or respect them at all; you may see the Empire as no more than a bloated balloon of brag. Yet one nonetheless suspects that after reading Morris's spirited tribute to the vitality—and the accomplishments—of Britain's epic socio-economic-geopolitical adventure even the fiercest Anglophobe might be unable to resist a reluctant, whispered "Wizard, by Jove!"

Spiritual Odyssey

Leo Baeck: Teacher of Theresienstadt, by Albert H. Friedlander (Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 294 pp. \$8.95), traces the intellectual development of the distinguished German rabbi within its historical context. Alan W. Miller is Rabbi of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, New York City, and a member of the editorial board of the *Reconstructionist Magazine*.

By ALAN W. MILLER

LEO BAECK WAS THE SON of a traditionalist rabbi and scholar. Born in 1873, he studied at Breslau, home of the Historical School of Judaism, which profoundly influenced American Conservative Judaism, and at the Lehranstalt in Berlin, home of Abraham Geiger, pillar of the "science of Judaism" school. It might be said, in American parlance, that he started out Orthodox, moved to Conservative, and ended up as Reform. But the spiritual odyssey was continuous rather than discrete. Baeck always retained a reverence for tradition and ritual even though, in later life, "Halacha became an idea, a concept which he appreciated and honored but which he now saw as an abstraction and not as the reality of his life."

In Lissa (Posen), the border town that was Baeck's home, his father had enjoyed close friendship with a Calvinist minister. Baeck's childhood and education thus all conspired to make of him in his earliest manhood an epitome of the ecumenical. This partly explains the nature of his first major work, *The Essence of Judaism*, by implication an apologetic answer to Harnack's *The Essence of*



"Take me to Havana!"

Christianity. Here he stated that there must be a dialogue between Jew and Christian, but it can be authentic only if the Jewish sources of Christianity are fully and consciously acknowledged. The Jewishness of Jesus may not be denied. This also explains why, in the dark days of 1933, German Jewry chose Baeck to be their leader to negotiate with the Nazis. His empathy with all segments of the community, including the Zionists, his insistence that all Jewish denominations expressed the essence of Judaism, made him the ideal spokesman for all factions. This was his life as well as his philosophy.

Baeck could have left Germany at any time in the Thirties. He deliberately chose to remain with his flock. Five times he was imprisoned; finally he was sent to Theresienstadt where, under incredible conditions of degradation, he continued to function as a rabbi and teacher. By a remarkable quirk of fate the Nazis believed that, with the death of a certain Moravian rabbi named Beck shortly after Baeck's arrival in Theresienstadt, they had rid themselves of their arch-antagonist. "Herr Baeck, are you still alive?" asked an unbelieving Eichmann in April 1945. "I thought you were dead." "You are apparently announcing a future occurrence," answered Baeck. He survived the war to teach Judaism in many parts of the world, and died in London in 1956. A distinguished German social psychologist, H. G. Adler, who endured the camp with Baeck, wrote of him later: "He was a shining beacon in the salt-tear ocean of despair." This reviewer distinctly remembers him as a rabbi who could make of the priestly benediction at the conclusion of an act of worship a direct and immediate revelation of the Divine.

SUCH a life is the stuff that myths and saints are made of. It is to Albert Friedlander's credit that, despite his profound love for his late teacher, he does not permit emotion to interfere with objective scholarly appraisal. Leo Baeck is no hagiography. The master's insistence on the validity of polarity is shown most clearly in the pupil's willingness to consider all viewpoints. Friedlander acknowledges candidly the moral and judgmental problems involved in Baeck's refusal to share his unequivocal knowledge of Auschwitz with his fellow concentration camp inmates. (Was there a Schweitzerian element of autocratic paternalism manifested here?) He is prepared to consider without passion accusations of collaboration. In tracing the intellectual development of Baeck he shows the influences of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Hermann Cohen, and even Harnack. But he is not beyond reproaching Baeck for impoliteness, for an occasional superficial judgment, for an improperly

rigid dichotomy of romantic and classical, for giving more room in *The Essence of Judaism*, despite an avowed ecumenism, to the liberal than to the traditionalist.

The author is aware that there are men whose charisma swamps their message. He writes "to create a more balanced picture." But his attempt to portray Baeck as a great thinker as well as a great man merely throws the man into yet sharper relief. On Friedlander's own admission Baeck's basic thesis of mystery and commandment and the religion of polarity were there from the start. In the articles published between 1895 and 1897 "we come to realize that the pattern of Baeck's thoughts was established from earliest times." If Baeck has not had the impact on American Jewish thought the author would have wished, it is not because the American Jew has failed to read Baeck's later works. It is surely because his basic faith in man and in the cosmic viability of the Jewish people may be expressed better in indigenous American terms than in the turgid and laborious paradoxes of German metaphysics with their Hegelian overtones. "Much of Baeck's writings," observes Friedlander, "is metaphysical poetry, an open language which strikes at the limits of theology, desirous not so much of producing a system as of indicating a direction in which an intermingling of the rational and nonrational brings us to the knowledge of the twofoldness of human existence."

Afficionados of the Germanic idiom will be convinced, but not those reared on the cadences of London and New York. Baeck is a Heschel, not a Kaplan. Yet Baeck himself wrote unwittingly, though prophetically, of an American Jewry relying overheavily on Germanic theological idiom (see Milton Himmel-farb's introduction to the *Commentary* symposium *The Condition of Jewish Belief*, Macmillan, 1966.)

Friedlander's book is a welcome and refreshing antidote to Death-of-God theology. The point he makes, pellucidly and with consummate skill, that a single believing Baeck inside a concentration camp outweighs many theoretical theologians outside, gives food for thought. A contemporary faith depends not primarily upon any metaphysic but on the possibility of man. Can man be human? Baeck's life answers yes, even unto holocaust. On this rock even a secular society may build a church. What is now needed is a full-scale biography of this twentieth-century man who supremely points to God. Hopefully it will come from the pen of this brilliant young rabbi who, in his sensitive and thoughtful exploration of the tension between the mind and the man, has carried the polarity of the master one ethical stage further.

The South Without Magnolias

Coming of Age in Mississippi: An Autobiography, by Anne Moody (Dial, 348 pp. \$5.95), chronicles a young black girl's struggle to gain an education and her efforts in the civil rights movement. Carl N. Degler is professor of American History at Stanford University.

By CARL N. DEGLER

THOUGH THE AUTHOR of this autobiography is only twenty-eight years old, her life has already spanned the revolution that has propelled the Negro from the South to the North and from the country to the city, and made racial equality the central issue of our time.

Anne Moody, who is black, grew up in Wilkinson County in Mississippi's black belt, the daughter of a sharecropper whose wife had to work along with him in the fields throughout her regular pregnancies. Unlike her parents or her brothers and sisters, Anne went on from school to college and to participation in sit-ins and the voter registration drive in Canton, Mississippi. She now lives in New York City with her husband. Her story of the rural Southern black is at once different from and yet strikingly similar to that of the urban Northern black as recorded by Claude Brown or Malcolm X. In the rural South, as in the North, the black experience is still one of poverty, discrimination, family disruption, and unemployment.

The book is simply, even naïvely written, for there is little introspection or
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—Jack Schrier.

Anne Moody: "Nonviolence is out."